

**Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program
Second Meeting of the Working Group on Agriculture
Chiang Mai, Thailand
22-23 March 2004**

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Introduction

1. The Second Meeting of the Working Group on Agriculture (WGA-2) was held at the Imperial Mae Ping Hotel in Chiang Mai, Thailand on 22-23 March 2004. The Meeting was co-hosted by the Office of Agricultural Economics, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand and the Asian Development Bank. Officials from countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), representatives from the private sector, and representatives from international and regional organizations participated in the Meeting. ADB staff and consultants also attended the meeting. The list of participants is in **Appendix 1**.

2. The theme of the WGA-2 was "Knowledge Management and Exchange in the GMS" with discussions focusing on how to develop, manage and promote knowledge management and exchange. The meeting included a general discussion by the GMS representatives that focusing on recent developments in agriculture, issues of regional cooperation, and potential areas for support. The meeting was aimed to (i) improve the awareness of the main issues that have arisen in the GMS countries; (ii) guide the participants on the country priorities that should define the agenda of the WGA; and (iii) hear the GMS representatives' views on the theme, especially on the role of governments, private sector, international organizations, academe and NGOs in harnessing knowledge. The agenda of WGA-2 is in **Appendix 2**.

I. Inaugural Session

Session 1 - Chair: Thailand

Welcome Remarks

3. Dr. Thiravira Subhanij, Deputy Secretary General, Office of Agricultural Economics, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand opened the meeting with a warm welcome to all the participants. He expressed gratitude to ADB for sponsoring and helping organize the WGA-2. He outlined the objectives of the meeting as follows: (i) to exchange views and discuss current status of cooperation in agriculture; (ii) to address issues; and (iii) to prioritize activities for 2004 and onwards. He noted that the meeting would be an opportunity for GMS countries to propose projects, and hoped that they be later considered as GMS projects. Dr. Subhanij indicated that Thailand has extensive experience in agricultural development and expressed willingness to share their experiences to other GMS countries by acting as a leader in some projects, and encouraged others to do the same. He noted that these collaborative undertakings could assist countries to achieve betterment in agricultural development in the region.

4. Dr. Subhanij briefed the meeting on the program of the WGA-2. He informed the meeting that the field trip on the second day would visit a royal project on Fruits and Vegetables Gathering Centre, and the Queen Sirikit Botanical Gardens.

5. Dr. Subhanij offered his best wishes to the delegates and participants. He expressed confidence that the meeting will further enhance the already close cooperation among GMS countries, and bring about agricultural development by building on each country's strength for a more productive and better living conditions for the people in the Mekong Region.

6. In his welcome remarks, C. R. Rajendran, Director, Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources Division (MKAE), Mekong Department (MKRD), ADB, recalled the mission statement of the WGA as endorsed during its first meeting (WGA-1) in 2003, i.e., *"To help poverty reduction in the GMS through partnerships with rural communities to promote agriculture trade, food security and sustainable livelihoods"*. He was pleased to note that the proposed action plan for agriculture cooperation, as laid out during the WGA-1, was affirmed by the GMS Ministers at their 12th Conference in Dali, PRC. Mr. Rajendran emphasized the strength of the WGA in harnessing the partnership of governments, private sector, donors and international specialized agencies in promoting agriculture trade and food security and improved livelihoods.

7. Mr. Rajendran shared the outcomes of the 12th GMS Ministerial Conference, highlighting the three building blocks of connectivity, competitiveness and community; need for stronger coordination and cohesiveness; and broadening the participation of development partners in the GMS Program. He introduced the theme of the WGA-2 as "Knowledge Management and Exchange in the GMS" and noted that development partners would also serve as resource persons. He briefly reported on ADB's recent activities that would be of interest to the WGA, namely, the preparation of the Regional Cooperation Strategy and Program on the GMS that would serve as the roadmap for ADB's operations in the GMS; and the ADB's response to the outbreak of the bird flu in the region. Mr. Rajendran encouraged the participants to continue providing their valuable insights and support as the WGA carry out its priority cooperation programs.

Report on Progress and Work Plan of the WGA

8. Ms. Juri Oka, Project Specialist (Social Development), MAKE/MKRD, ADB provided a summary of WGA's major achievements since its first meeting in January 2003, where the WGA mission statement was adopted along with a discussion of 14 concept papers, of which 11 were prioritized. The following progress in several priority areas were noted:

- (i) Promoting Partnerships to Accelerate Agricultural Development - an ADB-financed technical assistance approved in June 2003 for \$300,000;
- (ii) GMS Cooperation in the Use of Agricultural Biotechnology - an assessment of the status of biotechnology, including in-country and regional workshops;
- (iii) Preparation of Pre-Investment Pilot Project for Cross Border Agricultural Supply Chain Management – being undertaken in cooperation with the private sector; the CP Group of Thailand, with assistance of Thailand Government, is providing training on maize production and post-harvest handling to Lao agricultural technicians;
- (iv) Improving Poor Farmers' Livelihood through Rice Post Harvest – a project proposed to be implemented in Cambodia and Viet Nam to be executed by the International Rice Research Institute that will also provide additional funding; concept paper has been prepared and funding has been secured;

- (v) Co-sponsorship by ADB of two regional workshops on (a) International Workshop on Strategies for Sustainable Development of Agricultural Production Systems in GMS Highlands, and (b) Workshop on Agricultural Investment and Cooperation in the GMS.

9. Ms. Oka also reported that the project concepts have been finalized to solicit funding for the proposals on transboundary animal disease control and the use of information communications technology (ICT) for agricultural information sharing. She was pleased to report that funding for the proposal for *Improving Poor Farmers' Livelihood through Rice Information Technology* has been confirmed. In 2004-2005, Ms. Oka proposed to prioritize the preparation of project proposals for two initiatives, on biotechnology, and sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards in the GMS, prioritized at the WGA-1 is underway.

II. Knowledge Management and Exchange in the GMS

Session 2 – Chair: Viet Nam

Current Thinking of Knowledge Management in Today's Society's Corporate and Public Sector

10. Mr. Dan Boom, Principal Knowledge Management Specialist, Regional Sustainable Development Department, ADB, presented the *Current Thinking of Knowledge Management in Today's Society's Corporate and Public Sector*. He reported that knowledge management, a new area of management science that has evolved over time and has become one of the most important assets for world economies accelerated by the ICT revolution and globalization. He explained the importance of knowledge management in providing the operational and strategic focus to organization. Knowledge management looks at organizational impacts in the areas of management and organization, infrastructure, content and processes, and people and culture. He noted the peculiar aspects of knowledge management – something that can be used without being consumed, and something that can be shared without losing it. He cited the different concerns in the acquisition, absorption and application of knowledge.

11. He informed the meeting about ADB's knowledge management strategy and approach being undertaken to strengthen its knowledge management and to become a learning organization, maximizing the use of its vast knowledge and drawing upon resources, skills and expertise both inside and outside the organization. He also mentioned similar initiatives of the World Bank and other organizations. He cited the joint project of the ADB and the World Bank, the CLICK, which serves as a regional hub providing knowledge products such as briefings, concepts and lessons learned, learning and videoconferencing.

Comments:

12. Mr. Rajendran, ADB requested the meeting participants to share their views on how ADB could further assist the GMS countries and the WGA in developing a knowledge management framework that would be user-friendly, accessible and relevant.

13. Dr. Shanmugasundaram, AVRDC representative noted that the most important aspect of knowledge management is quality, which he considered a responsibility at the

local, regional and global levels. He requested clarification on how ADB intends to handle the vast information available from various sources, and filter them to ensure quality. In response, Mr. Boom clarified that ADB has a process in place that screens and analyzes information before these are disseminated or shared with concerned parties through various media such as the library, web databases, and publications. This process is being undertaken in close collaboration with the DMCs, Resident Missions and other stakeholders.

14. Mr. W. Jaeckel, (Cambodia Resident Mission) ADB indicated that it is crucial to put meaning to data and how information becomes knowledge. He underscored the importance of a screening mechanism in the development of databases that supports the application of various processes involving investments on ICT, time, quality and expertise.

15. Dr. Bell, IRRI commented on the importance of information credibility that may be enhance through a good screening process. He also stated that knowledge management should focus on an area and more responsive to the needs of clients.

16. Mr. Riggs, FAO reiterated the importance of information credibility, but noted that while a good screening process is important, it is essential not to overly emphasize content control procedures to the point that too much information is screened out. He also noted that information needs to be stratified to suit local context. He commented that it is equally, if not more important, to build capacity in users so that they can successfully access the most relevant information to suit their individual needs. Mr. D. Boom informed the meeting of a joint undertaking between the ADB and the World Bank called CLICK that aims to bridge information gaps in the region and to build capacity enabling people to access electronic information.

17. The representative from Cambodia expressed his view that knowledge management seemed to be different from information management; the latter is considered a part of the former. He observed that knowledge management seem more like an art than a science, because it is situation-specific rather than a precise process.

18. Dr. Anek, CP Group shared that the private sector considers knowledge to a certain extent as proprietary information to generate revenue. He distinguished two kinds of information, one in the form of patent rights for application, and one that is sold as products.

19. Mr. A. Zola, ADB Consultant shared his view that knowledge is a function of development. It involves the process of obtaining knowledge, screening them to give credibility and disseminating to the people who require the information. He noted the role of the private sector in sharing information to the national and local government and the grassroots who then apply the information in their respective work. Mr. Zola noted that his development company extends information to the farmers and other grassroots recipients and in return learn from and build its experience, which can be extended to others.

20. Mr. Rajendran, ADB outlined the elements that guide the ADB in defining its program to include its target beneficiaries, reporting mechanisms, systems, technology, skills and resources. He noted that the ADB is governed by its corporate strategy, with poverty reduction as its overarching objective. Being a “young” working group, Mr. Rajendran noted that it would be important to see how the WGA could provide a platform

for information sharing, and see how it would develop over time. In parallel, he noted that the ADB is developing its knowledge management framework.

21. The representative from Lao PDR commented that knowledge management is a new concept for him but underscored its importance and the need to better understand the framework as more information becomes available.

22. The representative from Thailand stressed the need to put knowledge into use. He requested meeting participants to assess whether the royal project to be visited during the field trip could be considered knowledge that may be exchanged.

23. The representative from Cambodia noted that knowledge management agents also include extension workers. He recognized that knowledge is a valuable tool for development, but should not be monopolized if the objective is to reach out to more users at the grassroots level.

24. Mr. A. Zola, ABD consultant provided the example of the Thai Government's opium-replacement project in Chiang Rai, which has excellent experience in alternative development processes to replace opium plantation. Experience and information remain to be analyzed, evaluated and documented but once processed, could be useful for sharing with other GMS countries.

25. The representative from Viet Nam cited two important sources of knowledge, science and technology, and from local people. He recognized the importance of indigenous knowledge but commented on the difficulty in capturing, managing and disseminating such kind of information.

Knowledge Management in Agricultural Research and Development

26. In his report, Mr. Douglas Pachico, Deputy Director General, Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT) offered several definitions of knowledge management (KM) as (i) the process of creating, capturing, distributing and effectively using knowledge that is embedded in practices, cultures and networks rather than in individuals, and facilitated by technology; (ii) information with experience that can be used for action; or (iii) information management repackaged. For development organizations, Mr. Pachico noted that KM is knowledge embodied in technology, as well as the tacit knowledge that have to be captured and shared with other partners; and highlighted the need to (i) build strong culture of knowledge management and sharing; (ii) foster learning orientation; and (iii) build on lessons learned from collaborative research with partners.

27. Mr. Pachico introduced several KM methods and tools and shared CIAT's specific programs in applying these methods and tools. One of them is the Communities of Practice (COP), as exemplified by its *Systemwide Livestock Program* (SLP) that was established in 1995 to encourage centers' crop improvement program; develop and promote use of standardized methods; identify policy and institutional measures; and facilitate the exchange of livestock-related information, materials and methods. The SLP involves 10 CGIAR centers, 5 eco-regional consortia and a large number of national agricultural research institutes in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

28. To promote the use of intranets and extranets, CIAT launched the CIAT-Asia Website in August 2003 to share information on the major research activities and

products of CIAT in Asia. The *CIAT in Asia Research and Development Series* (CARDS) documents technical information and field methods that have worked for CIAT. The *Selection of Forages for the Tropics* (SOFT) synthesizes, interprets information and promotes the wider adoption of forages. The *Open Source Knowledge Base: Expertise* is a collaborative tool for knowledge sharing and group working that can be adopted to the information needs of any community.

29. Dr. Pachico shared CIAT's experience in applying knowledge management in rural communities through their project on *Local Agricultural Research Committees* (CIALs), a farmer-run research service that is answerable to the local community. CIAL was first developed in Colombia during the early 1990s and has spread to seven other countries of Latin America, where more than 250 CIALs now function. CIAT also devised an approach where farmer groups, with help of local organizations, can build skills and knowledge for the development of rural agroenterprises. CIAT also has initiatives to link farmers to knowledge networks; blend scientific and local knowledge; and strengthen rural planning.

30. Dr. Pachico emphasized the role of development organizations in the use of KM by rural communities, which CIAT is promoting through *Learning Alliances*. A notable example is the *Learning Alliances in Central America* that was initiated in 2002 with now about 40 participating organizations with a target population of 130,000 people; and the *Participatory Research for Development of the Uplands*, an IFAD-project in Southeast Asia in 2003-2007.

Comments:

31. In response to the query of Mr. Riggs, FAO on the roles of international organizations (including MDBs) in knowledge management at the rural, community level, Dr. Pachico suggested that the approach would be for MDBs to take the opportunity to work with rural communities on a pilot basis to extend and adopt knowledge to local situations, engaging Governments, civil society, and NGOs. Key partners may learn from the process for broader dissemination and information sharing.

32. The representative from Cambodia requested clarification about the role of extension workers in knowledge management, particularly in terms of mechanisms and tools. Dr. Pachico agreed that extension workers should be an important part of knowledge management at the national and local levels. He explained that knowledge management goes beyond information on agricultural technology but includes market information, and participation in local, provincial and national planning processes. Such process subsequently enhances information exchanges between urban and rural areas.

33. The representative from Myanmar emphasized the importance of applying information rather than merely generating it, and noted the role of extension workers who could be considered as a major component of knowledge management.

34. In response to the query of the representative from Cambodia on whether the concept of Learning Alliances is a major knowledge management tool being promoted by CIAT, Dr. Pachico explained that Learning Alliances is just one approach being adopted by CIAT in addition to Communities of Practice, databases, and other community-based methods. He clarified that Learning Alliances is a philosophy in getting, testing and validating information, and is considered a group-learning process where local information are codified for further dissemination and sharing.

35. Professor Singh, GMSARN raised the issue of the importance of promoting local entrepreneurs at the village level who could serve as support groups within their community to extend knowledge, thus reducing the dependence on extension workers, whose services may not be readily availability. With IT investments becoming affordable and economical, they could also be provided direct access to web-based information. The advantage of having in-village support groups is that they are part of communities, they could quickly respond, and they would be part of the social capital building at the community level. He suggested that ADB consider supporting this kind of approach to help Governments develop the concept.

Emerging Initiatives for Rice Knowledge Dissemination

36. A joint presentation was made by Dr. Mark Bell, Head of Training Center and International Programs Management Office, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and Dr. Albert Atkinson, Training and Courseware Specialist and Expert on Knowledge Bank, IRRI. Drs. Bell and Atkinson reported that IRRI has developed a means for empowering national agricultural extension services—and the farmers they serve—with credible, relevant, and timely information using the *Rice Knowledge Bank*. This is a new approach for reaching farmers that combines a participatory framework with the potential of new ICT-based tools to close the knowledge gap. The approach uses single source publishing to meet client needs. The *Rice Knowledge Bank* supports four criteria: focused, credible, has value added and demand-driven. As the *Rice Knowledge Bank* is further developed, IRRI will continue to collaborate with other research institutions; capture research outputs, as useable, and expand in-country partnerships to use the system and appropriately apply the information to their needs.

37. Dr. Bell provided explanation on how to bring the *Rice Knowledge Bank* to the Mekong countries. He reported that Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam are already partners in this undertaking, and IRRI has a separate project on Lao PDR. Dr. Bell noted that the *Rice Knowledge Bank* is not just a resource but also a repository of information that includes practices in the field or research materials, technology transfer, and training data. IRRI has been working with national partners to identify the needs of its clientele.

Comments:

38. Mr. Boom, ADB noted that IRRI has focused on a demand-driven approach in developing its database and wondered how supply of information is taken into account. Dr. Bell clarified that IRRI has a big supply of information to start with, hence, they subsequently considered the demand to translate the supply into useable formats for dissemination.

39. The representative from Viet Nam noted the partnerships are important but ownership of projects to build knowledge is more critical. Dr. Bell assured the meeting that IRRI has always consciously pursued efforts for increased ownership by the DMCs.

40. Mr. Feldkoetter, MRC noted that IRRI's monitoring was basically from the users of the web system and he was interested to know other monitoring tools being used by IRRI to analyze the demand for information. Dr. Atkinson responded that IRRI is tracking website use, and with the adoption of a single source publication, IRRI is also checking demand trends of CD-ROMs and print.

41. Mr. Rajendran, ADB requested clarification on how does IRRI strike a balance between costs, resource allocations and desirable outcomes. Dr. Bell informed the meeting that IRRI has sought the views of their economists on this aspect. Computations were made to translate the website usage to its corresponding training materials accessed.

Dr. Atkinson further explained that in estimating the return on investment of the *Rice Knowledge Bank*, IRRI looked at the cost of making 4000 years worth of research at IRRI available to meet user needs. Investments required included scanning devices and standard information management system, which was not customized. The capital outlay was not very substantive. Maintenance cost is also not considered high given the estimated outreach and extension of information.

42. Mr. Lefroy, CIAT showed that with the expansion of web-based information, the demand for their publications has increased.

43. The representative from Viet Nam commented that information available on the web would provide help in extending information to farmers.

44. The representative from Cambodia expressed concern about the farmers' absorptive capacity in light of the different development status of the GMS countries. In response, Dr. Bell noted that IRRI has been working with intermediary agencies to help build local networks and capacities to respond to their needs.

45. Mr. S. Shanmugasundaram, AVRDC expressed concern on the importance of including legumes, fruits and vegetables in the cropping system. In addition to rice, legumes and vegetables will help to release the rural families from the bondage of poverty. The project and the GMS countries will vastly benefit by the inclusion of legumes and vegetables. Even rice crops will benefit by including legumes and vegetables in the cropping system.

Session 3 – Chair: Cambodia Presentations by International Organizations

Using Information Technology to Make Results More Readily Available

46. Mr. Ian Makin, Regional Director, South East Asia, International Water Management Institute (IWMI) presented IWMI's use of Internet and other ICT tools to reach farmers that need information on water, soil and land conservation when farming on sloping lands. Mr. Makin reported that the *ASIALAND/Sloping Lands* (ASL/SL) network was established in 1988, with financial support from the ADB, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the International Development Research Center (IDRC). The objective was to help national agricultural research system (NARS) develop appropriate soil management practices to achieve a sustainable form of agriculture on sloping land areas. He noted, however, that translating research into useable recommendations accessible to extension services and farmers is the key to obtaining the maximum benefit from the ASL/SL network. A *Database and Decision Support System* (DSS) was initiated in 2000 in collaboration with organizations in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. It has been developed to assist extension services in the region obtain reliable and up to date information on sloping land conservation and management. The rapid evolution and expansion of the Internet has opened new avenues for disseminating research and extension recommendations. The

addition of a *Customized Recommendation System* (CRS) to the database has widened the application of the internet based tools to become a viable on-line interactive advisory service for use by extension professionals and advanced farmer representatives.

47. Mr. Makin enumerated key lessons from this innovative dissemination platform as follows:

- (i) the web-based and associated tool provides a decision support tool that complements extension work by providing meaningful, practical and methodological information on sloping lands conservation and management for the farmers/land users;
- (ii) the hard copy of the CRS is a valuable tool for the extension worker and supports focused face-to-face communication, motivating farmers to learn about erosion problems in the field and collect data;
- (iii) it is recommended that users review the recommended techniques carefully for application;
- (iv) information from the database are also useful for extension field supervisors, researchers, trainers, academicians and students;
- (v) tools require users with some computer skills; and
- (vi) additional funding is necessary to encourage and facilitate the use of new tools in developing countries and resolve issues relating to unreliability of electrical supplies and power failures.

48. Mr. Makin noted that while only Thailand, Laos and Viet Nam from the GMS countries are members of the ASL/SL, the on-line database would be a valuable tool for PRC, Cambodia and Myanmar since that they face similar problems on upper catchment degradation and soil and nutrient losses in agricultural lands in sloping land areas. It is therefore recommended that the on-line database be translated into the national and regional languages. IWMI also supports other on-line information systems with relevance to GMS WGA to include the IWMI Water and Climate Atlas, and the On-line Irrigation and Drainage Benchmarking Service.

Comments:

49. In response to the query of Mr. D. Boom, Mr. Makin clarified that the recommendations he presented were based on a review and assessment of the experiences of IWMI.

50. Mr. Rajendran, ADB indicated that information dissemination is a key feature of knowledge management and noted that once common platforms emerge, it would be easier to share and exchange information.

51. The representative from Cambodia noted that importance of differentiating and separately addressing issues on (i) how to make information available; (ii) how to access and disseminate information; and (iii) how to make use of information.

Empowering GMS Farmers for Knowledge-Based Agriculture

52. Dr. S. Shanmugasundaram, Deputy Director General for Research, Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center (AVDRC), The World Vegetable Center, R.O.C. described AVDRC's mission to improve nutrition and alleviate poverty through vegetable research and development. Since its inception 30 years ago, AVDRC has

built partnerships and mobilized resources from private and public sectors to promote vegetable production and consumption in the developing world; has developed core expertise in managing their research; and has kept pace with the advances of information technologies.

53. Dr. Shanmugasundaram reported that AVDRC has encouraged national agricultural research and extension systems (NARES) throughout Asia to establish subregional networks. With ADB's support, several networks were established, namely, the South Asia Vegetable Research Network (SAVERNET), Southeast Asia Vegetable Research Network (AVNET), and the Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam Network (CLVNET). Greater collaboration with advanced research institutions, the private sector, NGOs and farmer organizations is also being undertaken. These partnerships have continuously worked towards empowering farmers for knowledge-based agriculture that make them more productive and profitable, leading to a steadily improving quality of life in rural and urban communities.

Comments:

54. Mr. Jaeckel, ADB noted that Cambodia receives less assistance from AVDRC's projects than other GMS countries. Dr. Shanmugasundaram confirmed the observation and explained that AVDRC encountered difficulties in Cambodia because of limited participation and insufficient infrastructure. He noted the AVDRC recognizes the need to provide more attention to Cambodia, as well as to Lao PDR and Myanmar.

CIRAD Knowledge Management for Agriculture Sustainable Livelihoods, Trade And Food Security in the GMS Countries

55. Dr. Mandret Gilles, Regional Director for Continental South-East Asia, Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD) provided a background of CIRAD. Dr. Gilles reported that CIRAD's operations are based on partnerships where activities are developed and implemented jointly with research and development stakeholders such as the local communities, research organizations, funding agencies, private companies, universities, state authorities and NGOs. CIRAD recognizes the role of competencies in partnerships, hence, they established three knowledge platforms on (i) agroecologic systems (SAM); (ii) agriculture-market linkages (MALICA); and (iii) sustainable animal systems (PRISE). Under SAM, CIRAD developed integrated projects of research-action with supporting national networks in Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, and a network in South-East-Asia. MALICA was developed to build capacity on market analysis and city/countryside relationships of public and private decision-makers in South-East-Asia through applied research and training. PRISE is a research partnership between CIRAD and Viet Nam aimed to increase rural productivity, participate to the supply of quality products, manage animal biodiversity, enhance commodity chains and promote livestock integration.

Comments:

56. The representative of Viet Nam noted that CIRAD has been working closely with them; has provided training and other capacity building initiatives in every research activity; and has set up discussions with concerned groups. He considered ownership of projects as the key to make a partnership sustainable. Dr. Gilles added that CIRAD has 30 in house scientists and about 100 local partner scientists and technicians, who have supported CIRAD's capacity building programs.

57. The representative from PRC noted that animal disease control is a serious problem in the GMS, and joint efforts are required to meet this challenge. He informed the meeting of the bilateral cooperation between PRC and Viet Nam on a joint research on animal disease control with the assistance of their veterinary scientists. He mentioned that they would like to work with ADB in this area.

58. The representative from Cambodia reiterated that animal disease control is a critical regional issue but also noted that vegetable disease control is likewise becoming a major issue, especially with respect to the regulations on the use of pesticides.

59. Mr. Rajendran noted that CIRAD's experience is a good example of working at the field and work with communities to identify issues and to address them. He noted the importance of making projects more operationally relevant at the field, be it a fundamental or applied research. Mr. Rajendran commented on the renewed emphasis for ADB to focus on medium and long term inputs. In support of Mr. Rajendran's position, Mr. P. Teng from World Fish cited that their organization maintain a geographical focus for cost-efficiency and maximum impact. This selectivity approach requires redeployment of staff in the field where they are needed rather than keeping them at headquarters. Mr. R. Lefroy, CIAT also commented that they work at the field in collaboration with local partners to maximize impact.

60. The representative from Myanmar queried if they could benefit from CIRAD's initiatives. Dr. Gilles explained that political considerations of the European Union have prevented CIRAD from including Myanmar as one of the beneficiary countries. He proposed that Myanmar participants may be brought to Viet Nam or other countries for training.

World Fish Knowledge Generation and Management Activities in the GMS

61. Mr. Paul Teng, Deputy Director General-Research, World Fish Center presented WorldFish knowledge generation and management activities in the GMS. He gave an overview of the fish resources in the Mekong Region. Mr. Teng reported that WorldFish targets the following aquatic resource systems that have impact on poverty – ponds, rivers and streams, wetlands, coral reefs, and freshwater bodies. WorldFish has supported knowledge generation via research that focuses on improving productivity of small farmers/fishermen, livelihood outcomes and governance of aquatic resources. WorldFish has built the capacity to generate and use knowledge through capacity building among national institutions, fisheries library training, publications exchange agreements, and internet help desk. WorldFish developed Fishbase (available in CD-ROM and the web), an encyclopedia on fish, and the Reefbase, a global information on coral reefs, servicing coral reef management, monitoring, conservation, research and education. Mr. Teng underscored the importance of the psychological aspect of knowledge management that values indigenous knowledge.

Comments:

62. In response to the query of the representative from PRC, Mr. Teng affirmed that WorldFish has very limited operations in PRC but are making an effort to increase its presence in the country.

63. The representative from Cambodia requested clarification on how community-based management of resources can work given that communities are sometimes faced

with the conflicting interest of immediate, short-term, individual consumption needs versus management of resources for the common good. Mr. Teng identified ownership of projects as the key to ensure the commitment of communities to their programs.

64. Dr. Gilles, CIRAD commented on the challenge of working with the private sector in the agricultural sector because of their commercial orientation. Mr. Teng replied that the private sector should be involved in all stages of program planning to monitoring and evaluation to ensure ownership of projects.

MekongInfo – The Regional Information Systems for Participatory Natural Resources Management

65. Mr. Christoph Feldkoetter, Advisor, Watershed Management, Information Management, Agriculture Irrigation and Forestry Programme, Mekong River Commission (MRC) /GTZ Cooperation presented MekongInfo, the Regional Information System for Participatory Natural Resources Management. Mr. Feldkoetter briefly recounted the origin and history of the MekongInfo. It started in the early 1990s to address MRC's and the German Government's shared view that unsustainable use and exploitation of natural resources in the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) pose a serious problem.

66. The concept of the MekongInfo evolved in 1996 with a vision that it be a portal for the natural resource management in the LMB to be developed through a consultative process. It was developed over four years as a multilingual system available in Cambodia, Thai and Vietnamese, with Lao under development. MekongInfo has six modules: document library, case studies, reference, announcements, contacts, and forum, with two additional functions, i.e., resource gallery and hosted site.

67. Mr. Feldkoetter concluded that the system is in high demand and is very successful as a distributor of information. He also noted that it is less successful as a recipient of information, hence, "information hunting" has been critical. The system is also not a good means for dialogue and discussion. He observed that given such systems are public goods, the need for subsidies is always there.

Managing Agricultural Information for Poverty Reduction and Food Security

68. Mr. Michael Riggs, Information Management Specialist, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations shared FAO's experience in managing agricultural information for poverty reduction and food security. He introduced the World Agricultural Centre (WAICENT), FAO's strategic framework for agricultural information management and dissemination that enables member nations to access required information in the form of CD-ROM, print, imaging or internet-based. FAO's global information resources include full-text FAO documents in digital format, the Country Profiles information system, and the AGRIS database of agricultural research publications. AGORA provides Internet-based access to scientific journals in agriculture and related biological, environmental and social sciences for eligible developing countries. All these activities are being linked to the new FAO initiative to Bridge the Rural Digital Divide. FAO has developed an information management system for the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS), which includes field technologies used in the GMS.

69. Mr. Riggs also described the IMARK (Information Management Resource Kit) that is used for capacity building. FAO also supports (i) community development with

information; (ii) rural information and communication networks; and (iii) program for the rural youth and ICT. Given their numerous activities on knowledge management, Mr. Riggs emphasized the need for collaboration due to the complexity of information management, and the varied expertise of different organizations.

Comments:

70. Recognizing FAO's technical competence, Mr. Rajendran expressed interest to pursue discussions with FAO on how their programs could be linked to current and planned systems to provide service to communities. He hoped that there may be an opportunity for ADB to forge a partnership with FAO to address knowledge management issues with the use of technology.

71. Mr. Makin, IWMI commended the WAICENT initiative of FAO for not attempting to capture all relevant information in one website but to combine their own information with externally-sourced information, which users could also visit with the necessary links provided in their system.

Session 4 – Chair: Myanmar

Private Sector Perspective on Knowledge Management

72. Dr. Anek Silapapun, Senior Vice President, Crop Integration Business Center, CP Group presented his report on knowledge management and exchange to develop agribusiness in the GMS. He considered knowledge management as the process of creating values from an organization's intangible assets, and noted that successful organizations are those that know how to learn from effective and innovative uses of their own storehouses of knowledge. He enumerated the considerations in operating agribusiness as follows: (i) market potential; (ii) knowledge and technology potential; (iii) production potential; (iv) human resource potential; and (v) food safety and environmental concerns. He noted that an integrated agribusiness management should cover production technology, good variety, consumers, distribution, processing and post harvest. Dr. Anek shared CP's successful ventures on field crop business and integrated animal raising; freshwater prawn raising; red tilapia broodstock development; integrated rice business; and integrated fruit business.

Comments:

73. Mr. Rajendran took the opportunity to thank the CP Group for their readiness to be associated with and for their continued support and active participation to the WGA since its inception year.

74. Dr. Gilles, CIRAD was also pleased to have private sector participation in the WGA. He shared CIRAD's partnership with the private sector and acknowledged the knowledge that they provide to the different countries. He expressed concern about private sector's profit-oriented activities and questioned how they could impart knowledge beyond their commercialism. Dr. Anek shared that CP Group (i) also provides training and sharing of information to enable establishing contracts with growers; (ii) tries to provide price guarantees to farmers; (iii) facilitates in-kind loans to farmers through partnerships with financial institutions to avoid possible misuse of funds; and (v) provides buy-back schemes for grains.

75. The representative from Lao PDR asked Dr. Anek if there are policies in relation to cross-border farming. Dr. Anek replied that the CP Group is willing to set-up farming activities in any location that would be suitable for cultivation in close collaboration with Government officials.

76. Dr. Shanmugasundaram, AVDRC was interested to know how DMCs feel about the lessons learned from private sector experience. The representative from PRC noted that in their case, work is still underway albeit still in the early stages but they are learning from the experiences of others.

Aspects of Cross-Border Collaborative Training

77. Mr. Anthony Zola, ADB Consultant elaborated on the aspects of cross-border collaborative training in the GMS. The concept of collaborative training was developed in the context of several initiatives that have been undertaken where crop production is undertaken in one country and processing takes place in another country. The rationale for this model is to respond to the emerging trends related to trade in food and agricultural products with significant implications for human resource development and training programs. The model recognizes the following considerations (i) non-tariff barriers to trade; (ii) organic and natural agriculture; (iii) growing middle class and changing consumption patterns; (iv) growing importance of regional trade; and the (v) multifunctional role of contract farming. The cross-border collaborative training is a WGA initiative with its pioneering activity on maize production training for Lao technicians by the CP Group in Thailand. This undertaking recognizes the role of development partners, such as the Governments, the private sector, and the ADB.

78. Conclusions drawn from the model include (i) it demonstrated the potential for public-private sector development partnerships; (ii) the development perspective of the CP Group is similar to that of the Lao Government; and (iii) contract farming models exist throughout the region from which lessons can be learned. As basis for follow-up activities, the following recommendations were presented: (i) provide vocational education and agricultural training in neighboring countries for agricultural technicians and future farmers from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar; (ii) government agencies of GMS countries should pursue and actively promote foreign direct investments linked to contract farming; (iii) if the current initiative proved to be successful, consultations should be undertaken to determine how to accelerate the process; and (iv) examine the Thai-led initiative to train Burman, Shan, and Wa technicians in sustainable alternative development through the Doi Tung Development Project in Chiangrai Province; if found suitable, the model could be further expanded.

Comments:

79. Mr. Rajendran, ADB expressed his gratitude to Mr. Zola for his relentless efforts in piloting this initiative. He also noted that this continuing work was made possible by PRC who made the initial move to sponsor a workshop to share their experiences on agriculture and agribusiness activities in Kunming. He expressed hope that other countries would also be able to see themselves transform through their respective agricultural and agribusiness sectors.

80. The representative from Thailand also expressed his appreciation for Mr. Zola's work in the region and was pleased to note his Government's participation in this endeavor. He suggested that the GMS countries would benefit from more cross-border

collaborative training programs, for example in the areas of food safety, which is a major concern of the European Union.

81. Mr. Lefroy, CIAT shared their collaboration with the private sector. CIAT was involved in cassava production, together with the Government, extension workers, researchers and the private sector in Thailand. A relatively new initiative involves forest seed production with public-private-community collaboration. The initiative rests on a guaranteed price from the private sector.

82. The representative of Myanmar noted that there are no processing facilities, and thus they send primary products to Thailand for processing.

83. Dr. Gilles, CIRAD noted that some models are destructive to the environment, and appropriate adjustments must be made to ensure sustainable natural resource management.

84. The representative of Lao PDR commented on their efforts to expand research technology access and application, and the importance of building partnerships and cooperating with the private sector, the Government, and farmers for sustainable agriculture development.

85. Dr. Bell, IRRI suggested that it would also be useful to look at the experiences of other countries outside the region, and learn from them. An example given is the Basmati rice production in India.

III. General Discussions: Recent Developments in Agriculture; Issues of Regional Cooperation; and Potential Areas for Support

Session 5 – Chair: PRC

Cambodia

86. Mr. San Vanty, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Cambodia described several cross-border cooperation initiatives in agriculture with respect to the WGA under the GMS Framework; the Mekong River Commission (MRC) Framework, which includes a Basin Development Plan; the Economic Cooperation Strategy among Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand; and several bilateral agreements with other GMS countries. He also informed the meeting that the Government of Japan has recently announced its grant assistance to support human resources development initiatives in the amount of about \$1.0 million each for the GMS region and the ASEAN.

87. Based on the foregoing cross-border cooperation and practical experiences of Cambodia, Mr. Vanty offered several comments as follows: (i) donor consideration of possible assistance seemed to be affected by political situations but this should not be the case; (ii) regional projects should be consistent with local priorities and timing considerations; (iii) resources should be mobilized for the implementation of priority concept papers; (iv) implementation should be done by the GMS countries with ADB and other partners playing a coordinating role; (v) project funding should combine capacity building and agriculture production infrastructure; (vi) the need to accelerate implementation of the Basin Development Plan under MRC; and (vii) need to complement arrangements under different frameworks to ensure consistency.

88. Mr. Vanty also provided suggestions on how to improve the operations of WGA to include (i) planning of its work program; (ii) setting deadlines for submission of proposal; (iii) tripartite consultation between and among countries, and the ADB; and (iv) providing final copies of documents to the WGA coordinators for follow-up. As a priority for 2004, Mr. Vanty suggested to implement the 11 concept papers proposed during the WGA-1; tackle food safety measures, including inspection, and investment in equipment and facilities for implementing food safety measures.

Comments:

89. Mr. Rajendran, ADB indicated that under the GMS Program, the ADB is closely cooperating with the Government of Japan in relation to their recent announcement of grant support for the Mekong Region. ADB is seeking information on the coverage of the assistance program, and the possibilities of linking it to the GMS Program. These information will be conveyed to the GMS National Coordinators, who will be requested to pass the information to other relevant local agencies. He noted the concern of Cambodia on the delayed implementation of the Basin Development Plan and informed the meeting that this is being addressed based on recent discussions with MRC. Another regional initiative that should be mentioned includes the ADB project on Flood Management and Mitigation in cooperation with MRC is now on board and additional cofinancing, possibly with AFD, is being sought to support the program.

90. Mr. Rajendran commented that the 11 concept papers have been put forward and noted that food safety seemed to be a common interest and high priority of the GMS countries. He stressed the need to generate resources to support these proposals. Mr. Rajendran informed the meeting of the joint report produced by UNDP/FAO/ADB on Myanmar, that could serve as a good reference for bilateral agencies who are interested to work in Myanmar.

People's Republic of China

91. Mr. Liu Zhongwei, Director, Asian and African Division, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, PRC noted the activities undertaken under the WGA since its first meeting in 2003 that laid the foundation for further cooperation in agriculture. He noted that the Government has attached great importance to agricultural cooperation in the GMS, and efforts have been made to increase the financial input into such cooperation. He commented about PRC's active involvement in the WGA activities that included cofinancing of workshops, conduct and co-sponsorship of about 9 training programs with more than 80 participants from the GMS countries, and technical demonstration.

92. Mr. Liu observed that the agricultural cooperation activities of the GMS have facilitated the mutual understanding among GMS countries; promoted information exchange, and reconfirmed the key areas for agricultural cooperation. He suggested the following priorities for WGA in 2004: (i) continue to strengthen human resource development and institutional capacity building; (ii) keep the dialogue mechanisms among GMS countries while identifying information exchange channels; (iii) consider building and expanding rural energy and ecological systems; (iv) address quality and safety of agro-products and development of organic agriculture; and the (v) the creation of a GMS WGA website.

93. Mr. Liu Zhongwei shared PRC's proposed areas of support in 2004 including: (i) continue training programs on rural renewable energy; (ii) strengthen the experiments and demonstration of applied agriculture technologies on crop production, biogas, animal breeding and agricultural machinery; (iii) building of information network and promoting the technical information sharing by establishing GMS agricultural workshop and holding of agricultural information workshop; and (iv) continue the cooperation on transboundary animal disease surveillance. PRC submitted two concept papers for consideration of the WGA on (i) rural renewable energy training and demonstration project, and (ii) setting up of GMS Agricultural Cooperation Website.

Comments:

94. Mr. A. Zola, ADB Consultant, was pleased to note that PRC intends to have training programs on rural renewable energy. He informed the meeting that Thailand's Prime Minister has talked about ASEAN cooperation on energy development under the ECS framework. He suggested that there may be an opportunity for PRC to collaborate with Thailand on this matter. Mr. Zola also supported PRC's proposal to undertake agricultural technology demonstration, and suggested partnership with Thailand under the ECS, which also has priority programs on cross-border technology demonstration and exchange. He positively commented on the idea of developing a WGA website. He suggested partnership with the GMS Business Forum on private sector-related initiatives. He noted that cooperation with ASEAN + 3 forum could be explored for the transboundary disease surveillance in the form of harmonization of standards.

95. Mr. Riggs, FAO informed the meeting that FAO has been working with the PRC Government on information management by developing case studies, and broadening the scope of training, among others. He suggested that future programs should try to combine lessons learned from different but related projects.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

96. Mr. Anonth Khamhung, Director General, Department of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao PDR reported that Lao's activities in relation to regional cooperation in agriculture are based on the Government's existing and formal framework in the agricultural sector. He described Lao's bilateral cooperation with other GMS countries, and noted the need to complement such efforts in future activities. He was pleased to note that private sector partnerships between GMS countries exist in the form of investments in agribusiness, especially from Thailand, Viet Nam and PRC.

97. Mr. Anonth reported that under the recently restructured Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Lao Government has created two entities, the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), that aimed to combine all research and development works under one institute, and the National Agriculture and Forestry Extension Agency, that aimed to ensure technology transfer. Mr. Anonth explained that a Central Coordination Unit is being created within the statistics and Information Center of the Department of Planning to manage information from the various rural development projects being undertaken or coordinated. He underscored the potential areas for harnessing knowledge to include capacity building, exchange of information, and cooperation in research and development in consistent with market demand or which are commercially oriented.

98. Mr. Anonth proposed Lao PDR's priorities for WGA as follows: (i) strengthening

bilateral cooperation on specific areas and commodities; (ii) streamlining the exchange of information, as well as organizing study tours; and (iii) capacity building and setting-up of field demonstration in areas like biotechnology, agroforestry, livestock raising veterinary networks, fishery, small scale irrigation in the mountainous areas, and bee keeping.

Comments:

99. Mr. A. Zola, ADB Consultant informed the meeting of an agroforestry study undertaken in Thailand, which is considered an excellent example of definitive research. He encouraged the Lao Government to refer to the documents of the study as a reference for their proposed project on agroforestry.

100. Mr. Lefroy, CIAT commented on the idea of including a veterinary component to the intensification of livestock program being planned by the Lao Government. He shared that the focus should be on overall health and nutrition management, which has a demonstrated impact on livestock improvement, with veterinary component as a complement.

Myanmar

101. Dr. Pye Tin, General Manager, Myanmar Cotton and Sericulture Enterprise, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation of Myanmar highlighted the importance of agriculture in the economy of Myanmar contributing to about 42% of its GDP, 51% of its export earnings, and 66% of its employed labor force. Despite the declining share of the sector to GDP, he noted the opportunities for area expansion, intensification and diversification to boost the sector's performance. He also noted the issues that need to be addressed such as human resources development, inadequate support service, rural finance and requirement for land and institutional reforms, among others. He raised the issue of significant gap in technology generation and application in the sector given the limited development assistance that it has been receiving.

102. As part of the cross-border cooperation in agriculture, Dr. Pye Tin expressed support to undertake studies on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) matters, and to expand border trade. He indicated that generating knowledge and technical know-how are essential elements for tapping agriculture resources in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.

103. Dr. Pye Tin outlined the potential areas that Myanmar would like to support such as biotechnology, water management, agricultural processing, marketing and international trade in partnership with the private sector. In terms of WGA priorities, Myanmar proposed the following: (i) promoting partnerships to accelerate agriculture development and poverty; (ii) addressing animal health constraints to livestock trade in the GMS; (iii) upgrade SPS standards in the GMS; (iv) improving the fishery statistical system in the GMS; (v) GMS rural aquaculture development; and (vi) GMS business forum market research and business development initiative.

Comments:

104. Mr. Riggs, FAO indicated that FAO has attempted to include Myanmar in their project on information center on knowledge planning. However, one constraint encountered was the issue of limited infrastructure to support internet-based training on

information management. He reaffirmed FAO's continued interest to work with Myanmar. Dr. Bell, IRRI noted that Myanmar is developing internet connectivity, and that IRRI is working on an IT initiative in the south.

105. Mr. Zola, ADB Consultant suggested that the GMS Program could be a good venue to further engage Myanmar in activities in the region. He noted the potential for trade linkages between GMS countries or ASEAN members. He cited that Myanmar has started to produce primary commodities, which could later be transformed into agro-industry.

106. The representative from PRC noted the importance of having a mechanism under the GMS Program or ASEAN to deal with issues affecting Myanmar.

107. Mr. Makin, IWMI informed the meeting of a South East Asia Water Forum held in November 2003 where an agreement was reached to create a regional framework for performance benchmarking. He suggested that it would be a good for countries to be engaged in such a framework for cross-border learning.

Thailand

108. Dr. Aroon Auansakul, Director, Division of International Agricultural Economic Policy, Bureau of Agricultural Development Policy and Planning of Thailand emphasized that increasing economic cooperation will help reduce disparities in the level of economic development and improve the well-being of people in the subregion. He indicated that the agriculture sector offers a great opportunity for increased domestic output, trade, technical and investment cooperation in the GMS but noted an impediment in relation to the relatively low level of technological capability that could be overcome through increased capacity building and human resource development cooperation. Dr. Auansakul underscored that the road-linked transportation and telecommunication networks cannot yield fruitful economic benefits if there is no simultaneous increase in agricultural goods for home consumption and for increased trade.

109. Since the first meeting of the WGA, Dr. Auansakul outlined the activities undertaken by Thailand's WGA National Coordinator as follows: (i) facilitated the preparation and submission of project activities to the ADB consultant for agricultural cooperation; (ii) reviewed and endorsed the concept on "Improving Poor Farmers Livelihoods Through Rice Information Technology" as proposed by IRRI; (iii) coordinated and agreed with Lao PDR and CP's Group representative a proposed project on "Training in Maize Production and Post-Harvest Handling in Thailand" ; and (iv) organized the WGA Workshop on "Agricultural Biotechnology Assessment" in Bangkok in November 2003.

110. Dr. Auansakul presented Thailand's offer to support organizing and/or hosting study tours, workshops and/or training programs for transfer and exchange of new technological knowledge in key areas such as food safety; capacity programs for food safety; sloping land management technology; community agro-based processing, among others. He also noted the challenges that Thailand faces in relation to the implementation of WGA initiative, namely, time constraint; required policy support by the GMS governments and ADB; and increased role for ADB in closely monitoring a follow-up. He also suggested that a flagship program under the WGA be identified to be part of the GMS flagship programs.

111. Thailand submitted six concept papers for consideration by the WGA, and these are presented in a succeeding section.

Comments:

112. The representatives from Cambodia and PRC supported Thailand's suggestion to identify a flagship program for the WGA given the pivotal role of agriculture in the economies of the Mekong Region.

Viet Nam

113. Dr. Le Van Minh, Director General, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Viet Nam gave a brief background on the existing WGA cooperation. He noted that cooperation among GMS countries has greatly improved, providing opportunities for understanding, and exchange of experience, which could be based on the multi-benefit principles that contribute to poverty reduction. He also tabled several issues that require further discussion: (i) improve knowledge management on poverty alleviation; (ii) food security; (iii) food safety; (iv) natural resource management; and (v) disaster mitigation, e.g., on bird flu, flood, among others.

114. He recognized the benefits of knowledge management. He noted that results of knowledge management activities need to reach the local people, and be applied, where appropriate. He proposed that cross-country visits be undertaken between Mekong countries to allow learning of each others' experiences on specific sectors or issues. He informed the meeting of an upcoming rice workshop in October 2004 being organized by Viet Nam, and extended invitation to the meeting participants.

115. Concerning priorities for the WGA, he recommended that the following should be addressed: (i) enhance information between GMS countries; (ii) update ongoing projects in agriculture; (iii) strengthen projects on hunger alleviation and poverty elimination with special attention to ethnic minority and women; (iv) strengthen capacity building for agro-forestry extension staff; (v) enhance grassroots level role in process of identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and supervision of projects; (vi) organize study tours, exhibitions and workshops on agro-forestry products between GMS countries and in each GMS country; (vii) establish demonstration models with specific characteristics of each country; (viii) increase projects in biotechnology; and (ix) prepare projects on East-West Corridor Economic Development.

116. Dr. Le Van Minh proposed that the WGA 2004 work program should include (i) workshops between GMS countries; (ii) publication of journals on status of ongoing projects; (iii) improved information exchanges between universities and research institutions; (iv) research and cooperation on projects focusing on farmer in mountainous areas, ethnic minority and women in order to reduce poverty; and (v) implementation of the project on "Farmer livelihood improvement by post-harvest technology funded by JFPR. Viet Nam submitted 22 project proposals for funding considerations.

Comments:

117. Mr. Lefroy, CIAT supported the idea of cross-country visits as part of knowledge management initiatives. As per CIAT's experience, he confirmed that this approach has proven to be an effective means of familiarizing with or learning from the experiences of

other countries, that could be applied locally, where appropriate.

118. Dr. Gilles, CIRAD encouraged countries to participate in the learning platforms of CIRAD based in Viet Nam, where trainees from other countries may join to learn more about international scientific work on agricultural development.

119. Dr. Bell, IRRI confirmed that the Rice Workshop that Mr. Le Van Minh mentioned will be held on 15-17 October. He noted that it would be a good opportunity for participants to hear successful stories and lessons learned in development.

Session 6 – Chair: Lao PDR

Presentation of Concept Papers by Thai Officials

120. The following concept papers were discussed by concerned Government Officials of Thailand for consideration of the meeting:

- (i) Developing Capacity in Food Safety Programs in the GMS (Department of Fisheries);

Comments:

Mr. Teng, WorldFish considered this an important proposal since Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam are expected to be major exporters of fish. In this regard, food standards would be a key constraint in exports that should be addressed. Mr. Teng indicated that WorldFish would be willing to collaborate on risk assessment studies, if needed.

Dr. Gilles, CIRAD informed the meeting that CIRAD, in cooperation with the French Government, will organize a workshop in September on food safety standards, including fishery.

- (ii) Technology Transfer of Participatory Irrigation Management in the GMS (Royal Irrigation Department);

Comments:

Mr. Makin, IWMI supported the concept on participatory irrigation management. He informed the meeting that a workshop on this topic sponsored by ADB will be held in Viet Nam soon.

The representative from PRC expressed interest in the project and proposed that Thailand consider having joint activities with them on topics of common interest.

- (iii) Integrated Management for Sustainable Use of Problem Soils (Department of Land Development);

Comment: Dr. Bell, IRRI noted that a similar project was proposed last year, and suggested the possibility of combining the two. Dr. Lefroy, CIAT queried about the status of the concept paper on soil management that had been prioritized at the first WGA meeting.

- (iv) Food Safety and Developing SPS Capacity in the GMS (Department of Agriculture);

Comment: Mr. Rajendran, ADB noted that this project has been considered an important area of support by all GMS countries.

- (v) Promotion of Sloping Land Management Technology for Sustainable Agricultural Development in the GMS Countries (Department of Agricultural Extension); and

Comment: Mr. Makin, IWMI informed the meeting about a related project on sloping lands that set up network and research centers in different sites of Thailand, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. The project is due to end soon. He encouraged member countries to take over the sites, and make use of the resource center.

- (vi) Community-based Agro-Processing (Department of Agricultural Extension and Department of Cooperative Promotion)

General discussion:

121. Professor Singh, AIT/GMSARN reported that an ADB Cell has been established at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) to monitor activities being undertaken in collaboration with ADB. Examples of ADB supported activities include a TA on Tonle Sap in Cambodia; training programs, mostly on poverty reduction; and advance management course for Asian managers. AIT also offers courses on microfinance, human resources development, livestock production and ICT. GMSARN, on the other hand, undertakes programs on technology and management.

122. The representative from Cambodia supported the idea of Thailand-PRC collaboration, especially in the provision of training programs. The same support was expressed by Dr. Shanmugasundaram, AVDRC.

123. The representative from Cambodia further noted that in addition to capacity building programs, attention should also be given on the implementation aspect of knowledge management. He also requested that resource implications of proposed projects be identified to determine funding needs.

124. Dr. Shanmugasundaram, AVDRC suggested that the WGA consider taking stock of the outputs of all development partners on agricultural development, to avoid duplication of efforts, promote complementarity and take advantage of each other's comparative advantages.

IV. Closing Session

125. Mr. Rajendran, ADB expressed appreciation to all the participants for their active participation. He was grateful for the excellent arrangements provided by the Government of Thailand for the meeting. He was encouraged with the initiative shown by member countries and specialized agencies to take the lead in specific endeavors.

126. He supported the recommendation to identify a flagship program on agriculture but noted that the creation of the WGA even took 10 years to be decided upon only until

after countries witnessed a transformation of the agricultural sector. Nonetheless, he also clarified that existing flagship programs, for example on infrastructure, and trade facilitation, have important implications on the agricultural sector. Further thought is required on the what type of initiative may be considered a “flagship program” in the agriculture sector.

127. To summarize, Mr. Rajendran provided a recap of the discussions that transpired during the past two days.

Knowledge Management:

128. He noted that the theme of the meeting has provided the opportunity for the WGA to become familiar with knowledge management related issues and initiatives ongoing in this area, to establish a mechanism for continued sharing of information and making them accessible to users. The views expressed on knowledge management have been substantive, and the debate should keep going. ADB will likewise process the information to determine what role it may play in this regard. Knowledge management issues that require attention or further thinking are (i) information versus knowledge; (ii) indigenous knowledge; (iii) balancing the user need and knowledge creation/supply of knowledge; (iv) investments required; (v) focus on end-users; (vi) governance; (vii) private sector participation; and (viii) ensuring credibility of knowledge.

Cooperation in Agricultural Development:

129. The need for greater coordination, synergies and linkages in the region was highlighted, especially in the context of the various forums that have been established such as the ASEAN, ECS, GMS, and bilateral agreements. Issues relating to trade and investment are also to be given attention.

Potential Areas of Support:

130. Outcomes of the WGA-2 meeting include common suggestions to prioritize for 2004-2005 in the following areas: (i) addressing food safety and sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards issues; (ii) capacity building to promote agriculture development in various areas; (iii) information exchange; (iv) further consideration of specific projects proposed by Viet Nam, Thailand and PRC; (v) creation of a GMS WGA website; (vi) seminar on good practices; (vii) PRC-Thailand cooperation; (viii) addressing transboundary animal disease control; and (ix) identification of a flagship program for agriculture

131. Mr. Rajendran noted that he looks forward to the participants’ continued support and active participation in subsequent activities of the WGA.

**Greater Mekong Subregion
Second Meeting of the Working Group on Agriculture (WGA-2)
22-23 March 2004
Chiang Mai, Thailand**

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**Greater Mekong Subregion
Second Meeting of the Working Group on Agriculture (WGA-2)
22-23 March 2004
Chiang Mai, Thailand**

Program and Agenda

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Sunday, 21 March 2004	
1300-2100 hrs.	: Arrival of Delegates at Chiang Mai International Airport Check-in at the Imperial Mae Ping Hotel
Monday, 22 March 2004	
0800-0830 hrs.	: Registration
Session 1 — Chair: Thailand	
0830-0900 hrs.	: Welcome Remarks Dr. Thiravira Subhanij Deputy Secretary General, OAE, MOAC Mr. C. R. Rajendran Director, Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources Division, Mekong Department, ADB
0900-0925 hrs.	: Summary of Activities Ms. J. Oka Project Specialist, Social Development Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources Division, ADB

Session 2 — Chair: Viet Nam

THEME: Knowledge Management and Exchange in the GMS

- 0925-1040 hrs : "Current thinking of Knowledge Management in today's society's, corporate and public sectors"
(60 min presentation 15 min Q&A)
Presenter: D. Boom, Principal Knowledge Management Specialist, ADB
- 1040-1100 hrs. : Coffee Break
- 1100-1140 hrs. : "Knowledge Management in Agricultural Research and Development"
(30 min presentation, 10 min Q&A)
Presenter: D. Pachico, CIAT
- 1140-1220 hrs. : "Emerging Initiatives for Rice Knowledge Dissemination"
(30 min presentation; 10 min Q&A)
Presenters: A. Atkinson; M. Bell, IRRI
- 1220-1400 hrs. : Lunch

Session 3 — Chair: Cambodia

- 1400-1530 hrs. : Presentations by International Institutions
"Using Information Technology to Make Results More Readily Available"
– I. Makin, IWMI
"Empowering GMS Farmers for Knowledge-Based Agriculture"
– S. Shanmugasundaram. AVRDC

“CIRAD Knowledge Management for Agriculture Sustainable Livelihoods, Trade and Food Security in the GMS Countries”

(15 mins)

– M. Gilles, CIRAD

“ World Fish Knowledge Generation and Management Activities in the Greater Mekong Subregion” (15 mins.)

– P. Teng, World Fish

“Mekong Info – The Regional Information Systems for Participatory Natural Resources Management”

– C. Feldkoetter, MRC

“Title to be advised”

– M. Riggs, FAO

1530-1550 hrs. : Coffee Break

Session 4 — Chair: Myanmar

1550-1630 hrs. : Private Sector Perspective on Knowledge Management
(30 min presentation; 10 min Q&A)
Presenter: CP Group Representative

1630-1700 hrs. : *“Aspects of Cross-border Collaborative Training”*
– A. Zola

1900-2100 hrs. : Reception Dinner hosted by The Office of Agricultural Economics, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

Tuesday, 23 March 2004**Session 5 — Chair: PRC**

0830-1015 hrs. : General Discussion
 – Recent Developments in Agriculture
 – Issues of Regional Cooperation
 – Potential Areas for Support

1015-1030 hrs. : Coffee Break

Session 6 — Chair: Lao PDR

1030-1145 hrs. : Continuation of General Discussion

1145-1200 hrs. : Closing Remarks

1200-1300 hrs. : Lunch

Field Visit

1300-1400 hrs. : Royal Project
 (Fruits and Vegetables Gathering Centre)

1500-1700 hrs. : Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden

1900-2200 hrs. : Dinner hosted by the ADB
 (Imperial Mae Ping Hotel)

Wednesday, 24 March 2004

AM : Check out from the Imperial Mae
 Ping Hotel
 Departure from Chiang Mai
 International Airport